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CHARLES E. SKINNER

Dr. Charles E. Skinner--Engineer

By FRED H. TRIMMER, E.E. 3

ABOUT four decades ago the need for technical training was just beginning to be appreciated. At that time very few schools in the country gave engineering degrees. Mechanical engineering was the main branch of engineering taught at that time. The electrical industry was just emerging from the laboratory stage on to the commercial horizon. Since then it has developed into one of the world's major industries. The conveniences made possible by it are known and used wherever civilization has penetrated—from darkest Africa to the poles. Many men who entered the industry those few decades ago have grown up with it. They are a part of it. Its battles, problems, and triumphs have been theirs. The present leaders of the industry come chiefly from this group.

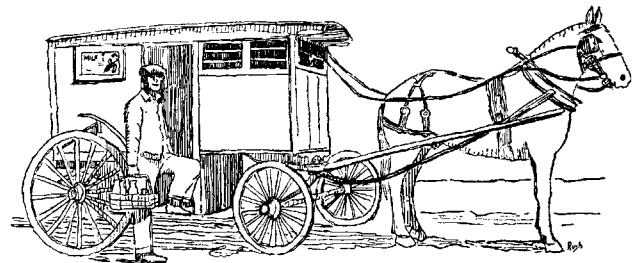
One of these leaders is Dr. Charles E. Skinner. "Charley" Skinner, as he is known to his friends, was born at Redfield, Ohio, May 30, 1865. After completing his primary education, he entered the College of Engineering at Ohio State at the age of twenty-one.

While attending the University, Mr. Skinner lived at the "Little Dorm," located at the corner of Tenth and Neil Avenues. About twenty students lived in this dormitory and boarded themselves. Like many other things that were a part of University life in those days, it has passed into the pages of history, but it still lives in the memories of those who knew it as a part of college life when they were students.

Those who lived with Mr. Skinner at the Little Dorm say that he was of an aggressive nature and while a student was always occupied, either working, studying, or busy with some college activity. Then, as now, many students worked their way through school. Mr. Skinner was employed by the University Dairy. He delivered milk from three in the morning till class time. The Literary Society was his chief activity. This organization has since passed out of existence but for many years was a very popular organization on this campus. At its meetings, students gave lectures, talks, and debates. Professor James Boyd of the Mechanics Department, who was one of Mr. Skinner's fellow students, believes that the students received a great deal of valuable training from their activities in the Literary Society. In addition to this activity, Charles Skinner was a prominent member of a social fraternity. At that time fraternity growth and expansion on this campus had just begun and it is understood that Mr. Skinner contributed greatly to the advance and growth of his fraternity. He was also a member of Sigma Xi, honorary scientific fraternity, and Tau Beta Pi, honorary engineering fraternity. From the fact that he was a member of Tau Beta Pi, it goes without saying that he was a good student. Professor Boyd has said that he was an outstanding student of that time. For a while, Mr. Skinner was an assistant in the mechanical engineering laboratory under Professor Robinson whose name and

outstanding work are perpetuated by Robinson Laboratory on the campus.

Mr. Skinner graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in the class of 1890, which was the first class to have graduates with a major in electrical engineering. (It was not till several years later that a separate electrical engineering department was installed.) There were three electrical engineers in this class, Ralph Mershon, R. S. Feight, and Charles E. Skinner. This is without doubt the most famous class of electrical engineers that ever has, or perhaps ever will be, graduated from this University. Mr. Mershon is an internationally known consulting engineer



HE DELIVERED MILK . . . TILL CLASS TIME

and is now located in New York City. R. S. Feight is Director of Engineering of the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, while Charles Skinner is Assistant Director of Engineering of the same organization.

Shortly after graduation Mr. Skinner affiliated with the Westinghouse Company and has been employed by them ever since. In that period he has had many honors bestowed upon him. He is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and was recently elected national president of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers. Referring to his election, an editorial in *Electrical Engineering* said, "For the first time in his forty-odd years of aggressive leadership in the electrical industry the Institute's new president takes a position vacated by another. Always he has pioneered, developing new processes, new departments, new products, new refinements. Now he assumes leadership of the Institute. It is confidently to be expected that Dr. Skinner's pioneering spirit, keen foresight, and indomitable courage will prove invaluable to the Institute."

The National Research Council numbers Dr. Skinner among its members. He has been a delegate to three international engineering congresses: the Congress at Brussels in 1920, the International Engineering Congress in London in 1924, and the World Engineering Congress in Tokio in 1929. Several medals have been

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awarded to him for his work in the engineering field. His hobbies are gardening and photography.

Dr. Skinner has just returned from a trip to Cuba, Yucatan, and Mexico City. The author of this article wrote him recently and asked his opinion on several topics which were thought to be of interest to the students of the College of Engineering. His interesting reply to this letter is given below:

GENTLEMEN: Your letter of February 18 just reached me here at Houston, Texas, as I am making my way back from a rather extensive trip visiting sections of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers in Mexico and the Southwest. I spent an extremely interesting week visiting the ancient Mayan ruins at Chichen, Itza, and Uxmal, Yucatan. I also had the good fortune to see something of the very interesting archaeological monuments and relics of the old civilization of the valley of Mexico.

You ask me about extra-curricular activities. I personally had very little experience with the type of activities that you have in mind, as my own activities aside from my college work during my stay at Ohio State had very largely to do with the business of earning sufficient funds to keep me in college. This sort of extra-curricular activity I have found to be of extreme value throughout my subsequent career. I feel that any activity which brings one health, or personal interest in matters of a broadening type will be of very great use to the student during his entire life. The engineer needs broad culture as well as intensive technical training.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES E. SKINNER.

Dr. Skinner's views and outlook concerning business conditions are both instructive and encouraging. In his inaugural message made last August to the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, he said, "Forward is the vital watchword, now as never before! We are now emerging from what perhaps is the most far-reaching of the cyclic economic disturbances that have occurred during my forty-odd years of active service in the electrical industry. Far from being downcast, however, I have supreme confidence that we are at the beginning of an era even more significant in its possible advances than any that has gone before."

Dr. Skinner is an engineer in the broader sense of the word. Men like Charles Skinner should be an ideal, and the careers of such men a goal, for the student engineer. The students in the College of Engineering of Ohio State should take just pride in the many men such as these who call Ohio State University their Alma Mater.

Mrs. Greene (at her first football game): "Oh, isn't it awful? Why, they will kill that poor boy underneath."

Daughter: "Don't be silly, Mother! He doesn't mind it; he's unconscious by this time."

—*Boston Transcript.*